CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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Anti-personnel Landmines

1. We express our recognition and support to the objectives of humanitarian nature pursued by the "Ottawa process", which encompasses the concern of the international community for eliminating anti-personnel landmines, thus reducing the great number of innocent people who fall every year a victim of this type of weapons.

2. We think that the Convention which, as an outcome of this process, will be adopted by the Oslo Conference, would contribute to the achievement of this noble objective.

3. At the same time we are convinced that the subject of anti-personnel landmines includes important aspects which can best be addressed by the specialized negotiating forum of the Conference on Disarmament.

We believe that the Conference on Disarmament through the consideration and negotiation of agreements complementary to, consistent with and mutually supportive of the one to be concluded in Ottawa, can make a significant contribution to reaching the goals of the United Nations on this matter.

We agree that achieving universal support for such a goal should be a paramount objective, the attainment of which is possible through a negotiating process in which due consideration can be given to national security concerns of involved parties.

4. It was with this in mind that we made a proposal to the Conference, on 27 March 1997, that led to the appointment of a Special Coordinator to hold consultations on a possible mandate for negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on the question of anti-personnel landmines. We commend him for his diligent work so far. Given the short period which he has had available for his consultations, and the need to take account of work proceeding on this issue outside the Conference on Disarmament, it is clear that he will not be in a position to present his final recommendations to the Conference before the end of this year's session. We would, therefore, strongly support the continuation of his consultations during the intersessional period and the presentation of a final report at the start of the 1998 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

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